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RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

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Riding Mountain National Park

Second Edition

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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Eagle Bay, on the North Shore of Clear Lake, Riding Mountain
National Park



Canadian Beaver

Riding Mountain National Park

TO the west of the great fertile plain of central Manitoba rises a long range of mountains, lifting almost straight upwards in sheer walls and broken terraces like cliffs from a tempestuous sea. The range stretches from the Pasquia hills in the north to Turtle mountain in the south and reaches its culmination in two separate masses, divided from each other by the deep cut of Valley river, and known as the Riding and Duck mountains.

On the lofty plateau, 2,200 feet above sea-level, which forms the summit of the former, swept by the winds of over a quarter of a continent, covered with a luxuriant growth of forest, and set with exquisitely clear lakes, lies Manitoba's new playground—the Riding Mountain National Park. Within its boundaries, which encompass 1,148 square miles, roam hundreds of elk, bear, and moose; wildfowl and beaver build their homes along its waterways; while a small herd of buffalo, descendants of those wild herds which once thundered over the prairies, browse on the rich buffalo grass of the uplands surrounding Audy lake. Here, Manitoba found a park ready made and for years, long before the project of a National Park was mooted, it has been the summer playgrounds of thousands from all parts of the province. The easy accessibility by rail and highway—the fact that it lies within a day's ride or less

of many cities and towns—ensures a maximum of use of the park both by the people of Manitoba and visitors from outside its borders, and now that adequate conservation and orderly development are assured it is becoming for increasing numbers a delightful holiday ground, a place of rest and refreshment, where they can breathe the larger air of nature, that “cordial of incredible virtue,” and rediscover a thrilling kinship with the Brethren of the Wild.

Glacial Origin

Many of the natural features of the park owe their existence to the Ice Age. The long ridge itself, from the Missouri river to Pasquia hills, was developed on rocks that lie approximately horizontal and which were never faulted and overthrust upon each other as they have been in the Rockies. The present escarpment is the result primarily of subaerial erosion which took place during the Tertiary period. Following this period came the descent of the ice, and the long ages when the whole region lay under an immense frozen sheet. During this period, according to Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, the well known geologist, a huge glacier moved southeasterly across the great plain east of the escarpment while another filled the valley of the Assiniboine on the western side of the mountains. At times these glaciers doubtless coalesced into one vast ice sheet, at others they may have been separated by the mountains either in part or entirely, throwing up, along the tops of the mountains an interlobate moraine consisting almost entirely of the boulders and debris of the Archaean rocks to the north. It is these boulders which are found everywhere throughout the park and which help to give it, especially in the north, its picturesque ruggedness.

As the ice receded, large lakes formed in the valleys, fed by melting ice. The great plain to the east stretching as far as the Laurentians was probably one great sheet of water, of which lakes Winnipeg, Winnipegosis, Manitoba and Dauphin are to-day the shrunken remains. In 1887, Mr. Warren Upham, geologist with the Exploratory Survey Expedition undertaken under

the joint direction of the Governments of Canada and the United States, traced its successive beach lines and named it lake Agassiz, in honour of the distinguished scientist, Prof. Louis Agassiz, the first prominent advocate of the theory that the glacial drift was caused by land ice. South of Riding mountain another lake, then occupying the valley of the Assiniboine, probably



The Broad Sandy Beach forms an Ideal Playground

drained its waters to lake Agassiz and may at one time have formed a bay of that lake. Riding mountain must then have stood like an island surrounded by lakes and rivers on all four sides. On the east and northeast it rose steeply, forming an abrupt escarpment. On the west it sloped gently upwards from the valley of the Assiniboine to the broad, undulating plateau which to-day forms the highest elevation and central portion of the park.

Indian Occupation

The great central plain to the southeast of Riding mountain was the former territory of the Assiniboines and Crees, who were then on friendly terms with the powerful Blackfeet of the West. With the acquisition of firearms by western Indians bitter hostilities broke out. The long friendship between the Crees and the Blackfeet came to an end and savage raids into rival territories became the order of the day. As the buffalo began to disappear the Assiniboines moved westward and the Crees remained in possession of the Riding Mountain region.

Yet, it seems probable that the Indians seldom ascended Riding mountain itself. Henry Youle Hind, who visited the region in 1858, says his guides tried to dissuade him from exploring a fresh moose track leading into the plateau, telling him that strange noises were often heard in the



mountain and that Cruising Along the North Shore, Clear Lake the place was full of devils. The old lake ridges, were, however, Indian highways for countless years. Hind mentions clay pipes made by the Indians from the soft shales which outcrop near the summit, a particularly fine specimen of which was presented to him by Ta-wa-pit, an old Indian of Dauphin lake. Ta-wa-pit also described at length the appearance and virtues of some gigantic bones exposed

in the bank of Valley river near where it cuts through the old lake ridge. "The old chief," he writes, "calls these bones a great medicine, he now and then takes small fragments, bruises them to powder, and uses them as a medicinal preparation. From his description I infer that the bones are those of a mammoth; his rough drawing of the ribs and teeth in the sand correspond, in point of dimensions, with those of that gigantic animal."

The White Man

So far as known, Hind was the first white man to explore the region. He was an early professor of chemistry and geology in Trinity College, Toronto, and at the direction of the Government of Canada took charge of an expedition to investigate the country lying between the South Saskatchewan and Assiniboine rivers, and extending westerly from Red River to the locality of the present city of Saskatoon. In October of 1858,



Beaver Working on Lodge

the party explored lake Dauphin and from a point near its southern end set out to climb the steep heights of Riding mountain. The panorama from the crest of the escarpment greatly impressed him.

"The view from the summit," writes Hind in his book, *Red River and Saskatchewan Expeditions*, "was superb, enabling the eye to take in the whole of Dauphin lake and the intervening country, together with part of Winnipegosis lake. The outline of the Duck mountain rose clear and blue in the northwest, and from our point of view the Riding and Duck mountains appeared continuous, and preserved a uniform, bold, precipitous outline, rising abruptly from a level country lying from 800 to 1,000 feet below them. The swamps through which we had passed, were mapped in narrow strips far below; they showed by their connection with the ridges, and their parallelism to Dauphin lake, that they had been formed by its retreating waters. The ancient beach before mentioned as extending far to



The Dock at Wasagaming is a Popular Centre for Aquatic Sports

the north and south, could be traced with a glass by the trees it sustained, until lost in distance; it followed the contour of the lake, whose form was again determined by the escarpment of the Riding mountain. It required no effort of the imagination to recall the time when the whole of the flat country below us, towards the Laurentians on the east side of lake Winnipeg, was occupied by the continuation of the Riding and Duck mountains with their associated ranges to the north, and when the Cretaceous series, superimposed



Black Bear

in patches by Tertiary rocks, extended to the basin of lake Winnipeg as it now is. The whole of this immense denuded tract of country is a splendid instance of the power of water and ice to remove many thousand cubic miles of rock.

" . . . Soon after our arrival at the summit, clouds began to gather in from the northwest, and towards evening a snow-storm set in which continued during the greater portion of the night. Beneath the shelter of the overhanging branches of a spruce we made an excellent camp, and having built a roaring fire, were soon engaged in discussing bear steaks as we reclined on a couch of spruce boughs, under a roof constructed of the same excellent material and impenetrable to snow."

Riding Mountain Forests

Riding Mountain Park originally formed part of the Riding Mountain Forest Reserve, and for over a

quarter of a century its timber has been under scientific administration. The principal species of importance are white spruce, jack pine, aspen and white birch, but there is also a considerable amount of black spruce, tamarack, balsam fir and some bur oak, green ash, elm and Manitoba maple. Among the other trees, there are mountain ash, wild plum and service-berry. Shrubs of many kinds—hazel, high-bush cranberry, saskatoon, dogwood and buckthorn—add their charm to glade and hillside. Wild-flowers, too, grow in great profusion and in early summer blossom in a perfect riot of colour and grace.

Wild Life

The park is a natural home of wild life of many kinds. Black bear, mule deer and white-tailed deer, moose and beaver inhabit its undisturbed forests. The largest herd of wild elk in Canada, numbering, it is believed, between two and three thousand head, range its plains and woodlands.

These beautiful creatures form one of the greatest attractions to visitors. Often, in early morning on the meadows near lake Audy, or along some outlying trail one may come upon a herd of 50 or 100 of these graceful animals walking with dainty feet that scarcely touch the earth, and necks proudly thrown back to balance their magnificent antlers. Moose and deer are frequently seen in the thickets or at the edge of one of the crystal lakes, where they come to drink, while marks of those busy woodsmen, the beaver, may be found along many a



The Wapiti, or Canadian Elk

stream. As time goes on and the wild life increases the park will probably become one of the most interesting wild life sanctuaries on the continent, a veritable outdoor school for students of natural history, which will present to even the most casual visitor unique opportunities for seeing and photographing wild animals of many kinds.

On the rolling plains near lake Audy an area was selected as a buffalo enclosure and here will be found a small herd of these magnificent ruminants which once roamed the Canadian West in countless millions. These animals were brought from the Government herd at Wainwright, Alberta, and it is hoped they may repeat here, on a smaller scale, the success which has attended the larger herd in that park.

Included with the buffalo are a number of native elk, moose and deer. Most of these animals are now quite domesticated, and visitors may obtain a close up view and have an opportunity to study them in what is practically their native habitat. The animal enclosure, which contains an area of approximately 320 acres, is reached by an all-weather motor road from the townsite at Clear lake, a distance of 25 miles.

Lakes of the Park

One of the greatest charms of the park from the scenic point of view is the number of beautiful mountain lakes which nestle between the ridges in hollows made by ancient glaciers. They are of all sizes ranging from tiny tarns to splendid bodies of water several miles



Young Buffalo Bull



Looking Down Clear Lake



from the Golf Course.

long. The largest and finest of these is Clear lake situated near the southern boundary of the park. This lovely sheet of water, nine miles long and varying in width from one mile to two miles and a half, reflects in its limpid waters the hues both of earth and sky. Seen from a little distance it appears blue as the eye of a child, but at close hand it sparkles with the deep hues of an emerald. In places sandy beaches send their amber reflections through the clear green turning it to olive, in others overhanging spruce and birches convert it to jade and onyx. But never do the waters lose their crystal limpidity, and when the wind is still, you may see a fish lying on the bottom thirty feet below, or detect bubbling up through the gravel, some of the springs which help to feed the lake. The greatest depth of the lake is about 150 feet. Graceful headlands and curving bays, fringed with spruce and balsam fir, break the shore line and invite canoeists to linger and



The Sunsets in Riding Mountain National Park are Noted for Their Remarkable Beauty of Colouring

camp, while masses of glacier pebbles and glacier boulders worn round and smooth by the tools of the Ice Age, point to the origin of the lake, and of the park itself.

One of the great charms of Clear lake, especially remarked by eastern visitors, is its magnificent sunsets. In the evening from the golf links or the main beach one looks down the shining stretch of the lake to a glorious pageant. Often the whole sky will be tinted a faint, delicate rose, passing into straw and vermilion, with bars of emerald green. The extraordinary clearness of the air seems to act as a reflector so that the whole landscape beneath becomes transfused with radiance. After sunset there is often visible, too, the beautiful phenomenon known as the Twilight Bow. This crepuscular curve of light, low in the west, remains often till midnight holding the reflected glow cast by the sun, which is just out of sight below the horizon, upon the higher atmosphere.

Along the road under construction running south from Dauphin through the park is found Edwards lake, a beautifully clear lake with a clean, sandy floor which forms the water supply for the town of Dauphin. Moon lake, a little to the south, is a charming little body of water of a beautiful larkspur blue. Ministik lake, north of Clear lake, has rocky shores and pale waters noted for their clarity.

Townsite and Motor Camps

About two miles from the eastern end of Clear lake the opposing headlands draw together forming what is known as the Narrows. Just beyond the Narrows on the south shore is Wasagaming, the Park townsite, where the Park headquarters are located. Here a long line of cottages, the summer homes of residents of Manitoba, extends for more than a mile along the shoreline. Nearly two hundred sites have already been taken up for business or residential purposes, but many others are still available. The land is leased by the Government over a period of years at a nominal rental,



Pitching Camp

with the privilege of renewal, provided Park regulations are observed. Within the townsite is also located the Park Administration Building—the office of the Park Superintendent—with which is connected an information bureau for tourists.

Accommodation in the townsite is provided by a small summer hotel and by an auto bungalow camp, both of which are operated by private enterprise. These bungalows are built in both single and double units, and may be rented either completely or partly furnished. Meals may be secured at the hotel and bungalow camp, or at the restaurants which are located nearby. A number of summer cottages are also available for rental, for periods varying from a few days to the entire season. Information regarding the renting of cottages may be obtained from the Government information bureau, located in the Administration Building.

Visitors to the park bringing their own camping equipment will find excellent accommodation in the Government motor campsite, which adjoins the business section in a beautiful grove facing the beach. A number of rustic shelters provided with tables, camp-stoves, and benches add to the comfort of campers, who are also allowed the use of an individual locker in an ice-house for the storing of perishable supplies. Spring-fed wells, constructed so as to be free from contamination, assure an ample supply of drinking water. Camping permits are issued at the rate of one dollar per month per tent, and are obtainable from the Park Superintendent at the Administration Building, or from the camp caretaker.

A full line of camping supplies is carried by a number of stores which operate within the townsite, while photographic material and souvenirs are also available.



Looking towards Treasure Island and Motor Campground

Two auto service stations equipped for making minor repairs, and carrying a line of accessories, also operate during the summer season.

Recreation

One of the greatest attractions to park visitors is the Government golf course, situated at the eastern end of Clear lake, a distance of about three miles from Wasagaming. The course is charmingly situated, with a magnificent view to westward down the whole blue length of the lake. Nine holes are now in operation, and are being brought up to a fine standard of play. Steps have also been taken towards the construction of an additional nine holes, which will bring the course up to championship length. A small clubhouse has been erected near the first tee for the use of players, and a professional is in attendance throughout the season. A line of golfing supplies is carried, while light refreshments may also be obtained. Rates approved for use of the course follow:—

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| One round (18 holes, continuous)..... | \$ 50 |
| One day..... | 1 00 |
| One week..... | 3 00 |
| One month..... | 10 00 |
| Season (ladies)..... | 10 00 |
| Season (gentlemen)..... | 15 00 |

A small stream, appropriately known as Bogey creek, which forms the outlet of Ministik lake, crosses the course and forms an interesting hazard. At the mouth of Bogey creek, where the residence of the Park Superintendent is situated, is a cold, bubbling spring which for many years has been a source of attraction to Clear lake visitors. Out of this spring gushes beautifully clear cool water, at the rate of 1,000 to 1,500 gallons per hour. The site of this spring has been a favourite camping spot for many years.

Two tennis courts, owned and operated by the Dominion Government, are available for the use of the public without charge. A well equipped children's playground will be found adjoining the public picnic grounds at Wasagaming.



Holing Out near Bogey Creek

There are several beaches on Clear lake suitable for bathing but the main beach on the south side of Clear lake, near the centre of the townsite of Wasagaming, is the most popular. Clean sand, shelving gradually out, provides delightful opportunities for the experienced swimmer and diver as well as safety for children. A bathhouse has been provided for the use of bathers. Towels and bathing suits must be personally provided or can be secured from a private enterprise.

Boats and canoes may be hired at reasonable rates by the day or hour. A motor launch also makes trips up and down the lake at regular hours, starting from the Government pier.

Fishing

Clear lake is largely fed by springs and its cold waters contain several varieties of fish. Northern pike are the most abundant but whitefish and perch are also

found in goodly numbers. Fishing is free under the Park regulations. The open season is from July 1 to September 30 and the limit for each fisherman is fifteen fish a day with a limit of thirty pounds. Some of the smaller lakes also contain fish and as time goes on it is expected these will be stocked with such game fish as the park waters are capable of supporting. Fishing tackle may be obtained from the boat liveries which operate at Wasagamung, while guides may also be secured if desired.

Hiking and Riding

The park offers many fine opportunities for walking and riding. Forest trails lead to many parts of the park and for the lover of nature there is no more delightful way of studying the wild life and enjoying the peace and solitude of wild places. Eventually circular routes touching several of the other lakes in the park and giving access to the rough mountainous



Pony Riding is Quite Popular

country to the east will be provided. This eastern part of the park is one which must become an extremely interesting region for visitors. From the edge of the bold escarpment which forms the eastern wall of the mountain there is a magnificent view overlooking the great central plain for miles in all directions with Dauphin lake lying to the north. The successive terraces formed by the receding beach lines of lake Agassiz are also clearly visible and tell more clearly than words the long story of the Ice Age in its relation to Manitoba. Saddle horses may be rented at reasonable rates in the townsite, while a number of ponies are available for children. Extended trips for parties may be arranged and guides will be furnished if required.

Ways of Approach

The accessibility of the region was one of the factors which led to its final selection for a park. Main gravelled highways linking up with roads converging from practically every part of the province pass within easy distance of its northern, eastern, and southern boundaries, while a passable road runs directly across the park from north to south, giving access from the towns of Dauphin and Minnedosa respectively. A new all-weather road has recently been completed from Clear lake, the Park headquarters, to the eastern boundary, connecting with the provincial road which meets highway No. 5 at a point one mile west of the town of Norgate. This town is one of the nearest points of access to the park by rail, being situated on the line of the Canadian National Railways. Rail connections with the park may also be made via Neepawa or Dauphin on the line of the Canadian National Railways, and via Neepawa and Minnedosa on the Canadian Pacific Railway line.

From Winnipeg the automobile route follows provincial highway No. 1 to Portage la Prairie, thence via highway No. 4 to Neepawa. From Neepawa No. 5 highway is followed north to the Norgate intersection, where connection with the park highway is made. Three miles west the park boundary is crossed, and a run of 22 miles will bring the motorist to Clear lake. The total distance from Winnipeg by this route is 178 miles.



Audy Lake Road

An alternative route may be chosen by following No. 4 highway from Neepawa through Minnedosa to a point about six miles beyond Minnedosa over No. 4 highway, thence north over a picturesque winding road recently constructed to the southern gateway of the park, which is less than a mile from the townsite at Wasagamung. The distance from Winnipeg over this route is 172 miles.

From the north the park is accessible by the road leading from Dauphin through the park. This road passes the Buffalo enclosure at Audy lake, and also touches North Beach, a summer colony on the north side of Clear lake. A second route may also be taken by highway No. 5 south to the Norgate intersection and then west by the new park road to Clear lake. The respective distances by these two routes from Dauphin are 61 and 79 miles.

The park is also readily accessible to visitors from the United States. Five main roads lead from the

international boundary into the province, three of which converge upon Brandon, and the other two on Winnipeg.

For an Ideal Vacation

The tourist seeking "fresh woods and pastures new" will find that the park fulfils all the requirements of the ideal vacation, for here is a settled summer community with hotel accommodation, stores and camp ground and with summer cottages fronting on a lake of emerald and blue water; here, too, are opportunities for fishing, swimming, tennis and golf; and then just beyond lies an almost virgin land where the elk and bear and moose still roam.

Riding Mountain National Park is one of the great sanctuaries of wild and beautiful nature which have been set aside by Canada as National Parks for the use and enjoyment of her people and for the stranger within her gates.

In these vast playgrounds one finds the answer to that faint, yet insistent, call of the wild which summer's coming brings to all those who dwell within a city's walls, for in the National Parks are great mountains, primeval forests and "waters blown by changing winds to laughter and lit by rich skies all day," a grace and beauty which will live in the memory always and call the wanderer to return.

Reqn. 5723.



Red Squirrel

THE NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

Alberta

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Banff Park..... | 2,585.0 square miles |
| Buffalo Park..... | 197.5 “ |
| Elk Island Park..... | 51.0 “ |
| Jasper Park..... | 4,200.0 “ |
| Nemiskam Park..... | 8.5 “ |
| Waterton Lakes Park..... | 220.0 “ |
| Wawaskesy Park..... | 54.0 “ |

British Columbia

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Glacier Park..... | 521.0 square miles |
| Kootenay Park..... | 587.0 “ |
| Mount Revelstoke Park..... | 100.0 “ |
| Yoho Park..... | 507.0 “ |

Manitoba

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Riding Mountain Park..... | 1,148.04 “ |
|---------------------------|------------|

New Brunswick

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Fort Beausejour Park..... | 59.0 (acres) |
|---------------------------|--------------|

Nova Scotia

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Fort Anne Park..... | 31.0 (acres) |
|---------------------|--------------|

Ontario

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Georgian Bay Islands Park..... | 5.37 square miles |
| Point Pelee Park..... | 6.04 “ |
| St. Lawrence Islands Park..... | 180.8 (acres) |

Saskatchewan

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Prince Albert Park..... | 1,869.0 square miles |
|-------------------------|----------------------|

18 Parks... 12,059.8 square miles



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